

greatest difficulty. The people of Malabar are so elephant-minded that reliance can be placed on their identification of the tusker as the one they knew in 1938.

GOVT. MUSEUM,
EGMORE, MADRAS,

A. AIYAPPAN.

20th November 1945.

8.—BIRTH OF AN ELEPHANT CALF.

Reading in the Miscellaneous notes of the *Journal* of the B.N.H. Society, on page 183 of Volume xxxviii, of the birth of an elephant calf on the bank of the Menik Ganga in Ceylon, brought to my mind an experience of my own on X'mas day 1903 in the Anamalai Hills, near Coimbatore. On that day, about 9 in the morning, the late Mr. G. A. Marsh and I went to visit a small plantation of bananas, on the Paralai Estate, which had been damaged by elephants. Hearing a herd of elephants a considerable distance away in the jungle making a tremendous amount of noise, much more than usual,—trumpetting, squealing, breaking of branches etc., we decided to investigate, and proceeding towards the herd, which could not be seen owing to the extremely dense jungle, we soon found a wild fig tree, very easy to climb, on one of the branches of which, about 25 feet above the ground, we perched ourselves. Shortly after this, three female elephants came up to our tree, and one of them entered a cane brake, (*Eta*) right under the branch on which we were sitting. The other two remained outside the clump of *Eta*, apparently keeping guard, for on the approach of other members of the herd, (it was a fair sized herd of about 30 animals we thought) they were definitely warded off. After a time—about half an hour—the two guards went away, but we could not descend from our tree because we knew the third elephant was still in the cane below us. We were very mystified as we could not even guess at what was happening. We waited there for a full hour, at the end of which the third elephant emerged, went a few steps, put its trunk to the ground and made that peculiar drumming noise, one so frequently hears an elephant make. At once a very small calf came out from the cane, and went with slow steps towards its mother. It was wet and shiny, but not very dark skinned. It was suckled for a short while, when the mother moved on towards the direction of the herd which was by then a quarter to half a mile away, still making much more noise than usual.

When we considered it safe to do so, and the mother and calf had disappeared, we descended from the tree and inspected the cane brake. We found the placenta there—a very pale pink, and weighing, we judged, about 10 lbs. This placenta looked rather like pale raw liver. There were two or three very much thickened portions, roundish in shape, about 3 inches in diameter which we judged might have been the attachment of the placenta to the body of the mother. These thicker portions were between $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch thick, but the rest of the placenta was much thinner—not more than $\frac{1}{16}$ th to $\frac{1}{8}$ th of an inch.

By this time it was noon and we went home. We had no weapons with us. Unfortunately the cane brake was so thick that we could not see the actual birth of the calf, and so are unable to state whether it was delivered by the mother standing, or lying down, but judging from the marks we saw, we thought the mother must have been kneeling. So far as we could guess, the calf when it came out of the cane was about the size of a half grown wild pig.

I am afraid these notes do not add much if anything to our knowledge of the subject, but they may be interesting to some members.

28, LALBAGH ROAD,
BANGALORE,
9th October 1945.

J. R. VINCENT.

9.—THE ASHY SWALLOW-SHRIKE (*ARTAMUS FUSCUS*)
IN THE NILGIRIS.

On April 26th 1944, I watched a pair of the Ashy Swallow Shrike (*Artamus fuscus*) at Kotagiri in the Nilgiri Hills and at an elevation of 6,300 ft. They were on a dead Eucalyptus tree and may well have been breeding, since they were very pugnacious, driving off crows and kites which came near. I put this on record as this species does not seem to have been recorded much above 5,000 ft.

2, ASSAM REGT.,
11, A. B. P. O.,
November 1945.

C. R. STONOR,
Major.

10.—OCCURRENCE OF THE WHITE-BELLIED OR SNOW
PIGEON (*COLUMBA LEUCONOTA LEUCONOTA*) AT A LOW
LEVEL IN THE KUMAON HIMALAYA.

Early in January 1945, there was an unusually heavy snowfall in the Kumaon and Garhwal Himalaya in the United Provinces, snow incidentally falling in Dehra Dun at 2,000 feet and down to as low as 1,600 feet in some of the deep valleys of the outer hills. Later that month I was touring in the eastern part of Almora District, and on January 30th I was in the Sarju valley near Nali forest rest house (about half way between Rameshwar and Bageshwar), where the river runs at about 2,200 feet and the road is some hundreds of feet above the river. Here I came across a flock of 8 snow pigeon (*Columba leuconota leuconota*) feeding on a grass slope between the road and the river. Snow had by then melted in most places below about 6,000 feet. I have often seen and shot this species at high levels near the snow peaks between about 10,000 and 13,000 feet, and the distinctive grey, white and black plumage was unmistakable even at some distance. But I shot 4 of them and made certain by a reference to the Fauna of British India that my identification was correct.